



## UA student uses local pet food pantry during time of need

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Two Washington County food pantries help people struggling to feed their animals by providing pet food and vouchers, using donations from residents and businesses to keep the shelves replenished.

Chance Bardsley, a senior majoring in social work, struggled to afford dog food in November until the Hungry Hearts Pet Food Bank supplied him with the resources he needed, he said. Bardsley received coupons in the mail, which he redeemed at Walmart.

"There can be this attitude of 'If you can't afford pets, don't have them,' but that's not always the case," Bardsley said. "We all go through rough patches financially, but that doesn't mean you have to get rid of your pets entirely."

Bardsley has three dogs, Mille Rose, a one-year-old schnauzer-corgi mix, Bandit Bailey, an eight-month-old German shepherd-black labrador mix and Daisy May,

a two-year-old black lab-blue heeler mix. He adopted all three dogs in the last two years after finding them for free on Craigslist.

"I'm so thankful that I've had dogs because they are great stress relievers," Bardsley said. "Daisy especially has been with me for so long, she's kind of gotten me through college."

Bardsley discovered Hungry Hearts in November while doing research for a social work internship. He said he was amazed at the generosity and availability of services at Hungry Hearts and did not find the application process invasive.

"I felt comfortable because the application process wasn't invasive," Bardsley said.

Bardsley has since created a flyer for Hungry Hearts and Ranger's Pantry Pet Food Bank and distributed it across multiple GroupMe chats in an effort to spread awareness of their services. He hopes his family, friends and peers will reach out for help rather than give up their animals, he said.

"We all hit hard patches," Bardsley said. "Whether you're in or out of college, life



**Aleena Garcia** Staff Photographer  
Adam Roberts, a project coordinator with the city of Fayetteville's community resources division, organizes cat food Dec. 3 donated to the Ranger's Pantry Pet Food Bank.

happens. Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it."

Joanne Traw, a Hungry Hearts staff member, said although it can be hard for some animal owners to reach out for help, they typically do before they let their pets go hungry.

Hungry Hearts requires

applicants to live within Washington County, spay or neuter their pets, have their pets up-to-date with their shots and vaccinations and agree to not obtain nor breed more pets while using the service. Applicants must apply over the phone to receive the redeemable vouchers.

The Ranger's Pantry Pet Food Bank has distributed over 161,806 pounds of pet food as of Nov. 22, according to the pantry.

The food pantry opened in 2010 after a housing crisis left local shelters "bursting at the seams" with surrendered

dogs, said Adam Roberts, project coordinator for the Community Resource Division of Fayetteville, who oversees the pantry.

"Originally, our goal was to fix the problem before the animals got to the shelter," Roberts said. "We wanted to keep families together."

Supported entirely by community donations, Ranger's Pantry supplies pet food according to the weight of each animal in the household. While encouraging Fayetteville citizens to reach out in times of need, the food pantry has placed limits on services for recurring residents in order to maintain stock for the most people.

Ranger's Pantry sets itself apart from other food banks in the area by providing solely pet food. The pantry accepts pet food donations at any Fayetteville fire station and at the Community Resources Division office located at 125 W. Mountain St. Community members can donate by dropping off dog or cat food at any of the locations. The pantry also accepts money donations for food purchases.

## LRSD plans to move forward with high school rezoning

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After a Community Advisory Board meeting on Nov. 21, the Little Rock School District stopped proceedings on elementary-level district division on Nov. 22 but plans to move forward with the high school district division.

On Nov. 22, Michael Poore, superintendent of Little Rock Public Schools, announced in a video posted on the LRSD Facebook that K-8 LRSD division would be halted for further consideration because of public backlash.

"With so much going on and the community being raw with all the different aspects of considering a move back to local control, maybe it would be a good thing to delay this for a year and allow the new local board to tackle it," Poore said.

LRSD board members are looking for feedback concerning the division of the districts, Poore said. The community had an opportunity to voice their concerns with the district division during meetings held at schools such as Parkview Arts and Science Magnet High School on Dec. 2.

The LREA president, Teresa Gordon, demanded that the

Little Rock School Board be under local control immediately during the LREA One-day Strike on Nov. 14.

"We will not stand for continued state control in our district," Gordon said. "It is time for (the SBE) to go. (The SBE) has failed our students."

Diane Zook, chairwoman of the Arkansas State Board of Education, said the rezoning of high schools in the LRSD is continuing, and the SBE suggested at a board meeting that the LRSD release a rezoned map by the end of the year. By having the official rezoned blueprint done by the end of the year, parents would have enough time to enroll their children in a school within their zone, Zook said.

"If they don't want them to go to their assigned high school, I have time to get into the lottery for eStem, Lisa or one of the other charter schools," Zook said.

Poore wants the Little Rock community to know that the LRSD proposal is still a work in progress, he said.

"There are pluses and minuses virtually with every single thing, but that is

always the case when you talk about school boundaries," Poore said.

Woods thinks claims from the Little Rock Educators Association that the rezoning of the LRSD would be resegregation in Little Rock are not based on fact and are "inflammatory language intentionally used to divide people," he said.

"I have seen nothing that suggests resegregation and I am frustrated with a lack of substance behind that claim," Wood said.

Wood thinks that statements like these are divisive, sparking

unnecessary backlash against the required rezoning of high schools in the LRSD.

However, Arkansas Senator Joyce Elliott thinks the SBE is criticizing the LREA because they are taking a stand.

"(The SBE) would have you think you are the worst people in the world because you do not sit down and lie down and roll over when they tell you to," Elliott said in a speech during the LREA One-day Strike.

Though the majority of high

schools in the LRSD that were in academic distress, based off of attendance and academic performance, have a large population of minority students, all rezoning issues were made based on academic achievement, Zook said. Zook also wants to dispel the perception that Interstate 630 was used as a border for zones due to the belief that it was used to segregate Little Rock.

Wood says local control could be returned in 2020 after the SBE five-year intervention period has expired if the LRSD is no longer considered to be in academic distress. However, the factors that categorize schools being in academic distress are often changing across the state, he said.

"I don't want there to be a different standard for Little Rock than there is for anywhere else," Wood said. "I want kids here to get an amazing education and the

accountability for that comes from the state level,"

However, LREA member Kelly Pedro said the factors used to determine if a school is in academic distress do not properly represent a school's performance and growth.

"(The members of the SBE) that come up with the control and support systems do not have the student's best interest at heart," Pedro said.

Wood thinks that redrawing zoning districts of high schools in the LRSD would help high schools in Little Rock no longer be considered to be in academic distress, allowing for the school board to be under local control of the school board to members of the LREA.

"I want to do everything I can to get the educational level in Little Rock high enough to meet the state standards so that this district can returned to local control as soon as possible," Wood said.



Arkansas Sen. Joyce Elliott (D) gives a speech Nov. 14 on the steps of the Capitol during the LREA One-day Strike.

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